

NAMI North Carolina 2008 Public Policy Agenda

The National Alliance on Mental Illness North Carolina endorses consumer and family participation in decisions made at all levels of government. Public Policy must meet the needs of those who use the system in NC, especially in these very challenging times. We support putting money into the right things after a year fraught with difficulties and money misspent. Our public policy agenda attempts to *get it right* in 2008.

1. Restore the Public Safety Net

- Fully fund crisis services including mobile crisis teams, crisis centers, and local inpatient units
- Allow LMEs to provide the following services:
 - system navigation (case management, care coordination and coordination for those in transition from service levels, jails, or institutions)
 - crisis services; psychiatry; other services not successful on private sector side

2. Getting the Right Service Mix

- Increase per capita spending on mental health services from 43rd in the nation to a level that is above the national average.
- Re-establish a required baseline of comprehensive services that every citizen who uses the public mental health system can access locally from either public or private providers (inpatient, outpatient, crisis, prevention, psycho-education,)
- Create an individual peer support service definition. By employing consumers who have “been there” others are helped, and very effectively.
- Adopt a policy of no reject, no eject for providers

3. Create Centers for Excellence

- Establish Centers for Excellence to ensure that evidence based practices and emerging best practices are provided with fidelity to the model.
- Link the training and the standards to public policy and funding, like rate incentives for providing MST, ACTT and other services that are known to work
- Create the Centers as a partnership between the UNC System and the state
- Make North Carolina one of the top ten states in the nation for mental health care as a result of this collaboration.

4. Decriminalize Mental Illness

- Fund five more mental health courts statewide.
- Implement Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) statewide so that 25% of officers receive CIT
- Restore benefits post-incarceration so that SSI/SSDI, Medicaid, Veteran’s benefits, food stamps, and other assistance is available at release.

- Pass legislation that does not permit the death penalty for an individual with severe mental illness at the time the crime was committed.
- Request a study of the NC court-ordered outpatient treatment to determine how to use it effectively
- Reform prison rules
- Support adoption of safe practices for use of tasers in all 100 counties in NC

5. Expand Insurance Parity

- Extend parity to cover substance abuse and addictive disorders.

6. Services for Veterans and College Students

- Support practices with proven effectiveness, such as ACTT, Integrated Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment, and Supported employment throughout the Veteran’s Integrated Service Networks (VISN)
- Request the VA to offer NAMI psycho- education programs for active duty military, veterans, and National Guard personnel who have served in active duty, and their families.
- Fund NAMI NC to expand NAMI on campus
- Provide state funding for those veterans not covered by the VA (national guard personnel)

7. Housing

- Expand housing 400 units to reach 1000 more people; expand from 33 current counties to all 100 counties
- Lift the limitation of Special Assistance to licensed facilities to include broader choices in housing
- Expand Special Assistance until the housing needs are met
- Maintain data on those with psychiatric disabilities in need of housing
- Fund interim housing expenses so that individuals will not lose his/her housing in the community during periods of hospitalization.
- Create an emergency housing fund to stop the practice of discharge to homeless shelters